

Sword Saint's Disciple - Volume 1 - Chapter 1

1. Letter from the Royal Capital

"Say, Cathy. Won't go to the Royal Capital as my substitute?"

Grandfather[Jii-sama] suddenly said while I was wiping my sweat in front of the well after finishing my daily training.

"The Royal Capital? It's extremely far from here. Also, what did you mean by substitute?"

Grandfather looked a little sullen. I wonder if it's something difficult to talk about? He said 'substitute' so that probably meant that the task is exclusively for Grandfather.

"Let me tell you about my old days as a Knight of the Royal Guards. I spent a long time together with the former King Spike in the battlefield..."

I heard that story before. It seems like they have a friendship beyond those of a King and his vassal. I presumed that much from what I've heard.

"By any chance, the letter that arrived to the village yesterday..."

It had an awfully extravagant binding and high quality paper. It's also unusual for a deliveryman to come all the way to this village.

"Hmm, in short it's a letter of summons... apparently, the present King Alan who was the son of the former King Spike, suddenly died without appointing a successor. The former King has three grandchildren who are successor candidates, First Prince Edgar, First Princess Lily and Second Prince Caryl. But it seems like he intends to back-up his granddaughter Lily so he wants to ask for my support."

It appears like a political struggle is somehow taking place in the Royal Capital.

It's the first time I heard of it.

This is the result of being deep in the countryside's mountains...

And from what I've heard, this country doesn't automatically appoint the eldest child as the heir.

The King who has the authority of appointment died, so it appears like it's necessary for them to claim a just cause in order to gather supporters before they are named King.

"Even so, why was Grandfather summoned? You've already retired. Besides, why would a Knight of the Royal Guards with little influence need to go back?"

"I'm very popular in the country. Even if you won't understand now, the fact that I've received this letter proves just how influential I am until today. I've even called Sword Saint those days, you know?"

...Nn!? Did he just say something that's incredibly chuuni?

"Sword Saint? Grandfather was called Sword Saint?"

"That's a story when I was still in active service... but I wasn't the one who gave that name to myself, okay!?"

Eeh, eventually he made a bitter expression because of that embarrassing title.

Now that I think about it, he still found it necessary to explain...

So he thinks Sword Saint is cool, huh? I smirked.

"Eei, that isn't an expression that a young woman should make! Stop it!"

"—uwaaa! Please don't throw that wooden sword! That's dangerous!"

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2. Reason to Entrust

“...sigh. Going back to the topic, is it impossible for you to go by yourself after all?”

After we calmed down from messing about, we returned to the mountain cabin where we live, Grandfather took a seat in the living room and resumed the conversation.

The relatively slender but trained Grandfather slowly sat down and started talking.

“Hmm. It’s pathetic, but I don’t think this body will be able to endure the trip to the Royal Capital.”

It was three years ago, when I was still fourteen years old, that Grandfather hurt his back.

Even though Grandfather always spars with me every morning and no matter how much trained he is, he’s already in his 70’s. He can’t oppose against his incoming old age.

By the way, I never won in our spars. I wouldn’t think that he’s an old man with the level of his skills, and I’m terribly convinced now that I heard his title as ‘Sword Saint’.

And I was so close to achieving victory just a little before he hurt his back... that doesn’t mean I’m a sore loser! I’m really not!

Because of that, Grandfather just looks over my form during swinging practice every morning, then after doing the house chores, I hunt the monsters who’re troubling the village at the foot of the mountain in order to gain live combat

experience.

“Normally, I will personally go since it’s only reasonable, but I can’t move my body merely out of whim even though it’s for an old friend’s request. I may cause you great trouble with this matter but I don’t have anyone else who can take my place, either. I can lose my life easily even with my training.”

This matter concerns being involved in a power struggle, so there’s a possibility of my life being in danger.

Nevertheless, Grandfather isn’t worried at all. It’s not because he’s heartless but because he trusts my ability.

That is what I’ve read from his expression after being together for a long time, so I was happy.

“Also, you’ve said before that you want to travel. Well, this is different from a carefree trip and your first destination is set as the Royal Capital. I also want you to go out and see the world outside of these mountains.”

Certainly, as a former Japanese in my past life, I’m very interested to see the townscapes. I’ve live in the mountains ever since Grandfather picked me up. That’s why, I returned these words frankly.

“Hmm, I also want to see the tourist attractions and towns that I heard from your memories.”

Grandfather likes to reminisce the more he gets drunk. He’ll go on and on about stories like the extremely light footwork of the former King, travelling to several places, acting as escort when going to the borders for inspection and during diplomacy trips. But I never heard stories about Sword Saint so he must have deliberately avoided them.

Grandfather, I hate standing out. I’m sure that it would be lonely once I left this little nest, but I want to undertake this matter.

I want to meet my Grandfather’s trust in me, he also rarely asks for my help so this will be a great opportunity to repay him for raising me.

However, there’s still one problem left.

“I’m fine with going, but will the former King Spike-sama accept me to support

his own granddaughter, Princess Lily? Even though I'm Sword Saint's disciple, I lack persuasive power since I don't have any achievements. Besides, isn't it impossible for Grandfather to live alone in the mountains with the condition of your back?"

I said my agreement while expressing my doubts but it seems like he already prepared answers, Grandfather lightly nodded and said.

"I see, so you're going? For now, that's good to hear. I already planned for those problems. We'll go down the mountains after you finish your preparations for the journey. I'll meet the liaison first."

... the liaison, could it be the person who brought the letter? They must have stayed in the village to wait for the answer.

Rather, he said preparations for the journey, why do I feel like I'll depart any moment now!?

This development is too fast!!

I thought I won't leave until a few days, I'm... I'm not mentally ready yet!!

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3. Supreme Sacred Sword

Despite being troubled due to the fast progression of the situation, I decided to begin my preparations for the trip.

I looked around my simple room composed of only a bed and a small cabinet where few books are placed.

Because I lived a life that only revolves around honing my sword skills, my possessions are few and dull.

The books are about learning magic, too.

With a condition like that, I have nothing to bring in particular.

“Should I only prepare clothes...?”

I muttered to myself in case I change my mind.

I'll somehow prepare other things in the village.

There's a village at the foot of the mountain...that is the Kaisa Village. I earned food and other provisions in exchange for monster extermination.

There are a lot of kind people there, so I would be able to use a little assistance when I depart.

I wore the complete leather equipment I always use for monster extermination then hanged the broadsword and main gauche on my waist and then returned to where Grandfather is.

“Grandfather, I'm done with my preparations.”

I called out as I returned to the living room.

At the same time, Grandfather also appeared from his own room.

He's holding a sword I haven't seen before.

"Oh, so you're done Cathy. Let me give you this before you leave."

While he said those words, I gave a look at the unusual decorative sword he handed to me.

"What's this? This looks like it can build a luxurious mansion."

I returned a slightly exaggerated reaction while accepting it.

"This is the sword King Spike bestowed to me when I earned my title. The inscription is lost so they don't know what it is. It became nothing more than something kept in the royal family's treasury, but I'm certain it's a kind of a sacred sword [Houken]."

Eeeh!? It wasn't an exaggeration at all!

It can build even a small castle!

It's the royal family's sword, y'know?!

...still, the fact that it got handed down to me in this kind of timing—

"Is this perhaps a substitute for my identification papers?"

If I go to the royal palace, should I display this by all means?

"No, that's different. That sword doesn't have the royal family's crest. To begin with, I mentioned Cathy's appearance to Spike in one of our correspondence before. Also, the person himself will know immediately when he meets you."

Which means—

"That's something for you to use. You need more than those two you have."

Draw it out, Grandfather urged me with his eyes, and I slowly pulled it out from the scabbard.

— A brilliant black sword appeared.

The length of the blade is about 80 centimeters, it's longer than the broadsword I've used so far but still a little shorter than a bastard sword.

It's the first time I've seen that kind of metal.

"A scholar in the palace told me that it's very likely to be orichalcum. But since

it's an extinct metal, there are no methods to ascertain it."

Isn't that the king of fantasy metals~~!

I've gotten tired from too much surprise...

Wait, pull yourself together...ahem!

"Thank you very much, Grandfather. I'll make an effort so I won't be told that it's a weapon not befitting of my stature."

"Hmm, be sure you use the sword. Make use of it continuously."

I wanted to say a lot of things about Grandfather's valor as he handed the sword to me, but in the end I just accepted the sword with feelings of gratitude.

"At any rate, Grandfather never used this sword even once, isn't that right? Why is it?"

I asked because his previous remarks were contradictory.

"That's because, if someone sees me waving around such a conspicuous sword, wouldn't they attempt to uncover my personal background? That sword can only be bestowed through a ceremony. The reason I retired is to get away from those kinds of irritating and idiotic nobles."

Well. That's for sure.

Excluding the nobles who are Knights of the Royal Guards, Grandfather seemed like he was hated by them for being a Knight and a close aide of the King despite being a commoner.

He talked about that before.

They were especially cruel after he was allowed to have a family name.

In this country, the nobles among the humans are basically those who possess family names.

Am I also going to suffer through the same thing after being in the center stage of politics? I thought about it, but from the contents of his story, it's very likely to happen. Thus, I remained silent.

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4. Guidelines

"Well then, let's go. Cathy, the cane."

"Yes, Grandfather."

Just as Grandfather said, I handed him the cane that's heavier compared to normal ones.

We'll begin our descent from the mountain.

From what I've heard, this mountain is around 600 meters above sea level.

Yes, there is that. The metric system.

I also measured the sword before with my eyes, using the metric system.

Because they have the same system as my previous life, I'm pretty sure that it's something common.

Surely, there would be people who got reincarnated or transported to this world, at least that's what I think.

It's not just the appearances and names, there are also features from my previous life that are identical.

Our cabin is halfway up the mountain.

In other words, we will travel the distance of 300 meters above sea level to the village.

I went out of the door, leaving behind the cabin I've spent sixteen years of my life.

I'll come back before long! I left in a cool manner without turning back.

.....

“Cathy, slowly...”

Yes, it’s impossible. I’m sad after all.

It’s the house where I grew up.

When I thought that I won’t see it for a while, my feet stopped unconsciously and I turned back.

“By the way, Cathy. I’ll move to the village so I’ll come with you.”

What did he just say!?

I heard that an inhabited house will be ruined shortly. If we’re unlucky, wouldn’t this mountain cabin disappear permanently!?

“— —Eeeh, then what will happen to this cabin?”

“Calm down, you don’t have to worry. I’ve consulted them before in case I might move to the village, and it was decided that the village will use it as a hunter shed. That’s why, the management will be alright.”

I was relieved with Grandfather’s words.

I’m glad, now I feel like I can leave the cabin to them.

Even so, it didn’t dissolve the anxiety I had about Grandfather living on his own when his lower back is hurting.

“That makes me feel relieve. So did Grandfather made preparations to live in Zack-san’s house in the village?”

Zack-san is the head of Kaisa Village.

It appears that he wants to take care of grandfather who is the village’s benefactor and judging from what Grandfather said a while ago, it seems like they’ve asked him to live in the village for a long time.

Grandfather came to settle in the Kaisa village when it was still in the early periods of development and he secured the territory [alone], since then he was given various favors.

By the way, securing the territory obviously means cleaning up hordes of

monsters.

As expected of Grandfather...

“Since this is a good chance, I’ll depend on their kindness. The youngsters in the village would carry the remaining luggage from the cabin later.”

If I entrust Grandfather to Zack-san and the others in the village, I’m sure he’ll have a peaceful life.

“Yes, it’ll be alright if you have everyone in the village... Then, shall we go this time?”

We restarted our descent from the mountain.

It’s all because Grandfather took time to explain every thing that I now feel reassured.

This time, I walked without looking back.

After getting down the mountain for approximately ten minutes, Grandfather called out to me to talk about what will happen from now on.

“Listen, Cathy. This country’s Intelligence Department’s ability is very high.”

“What’s that? It’s unexpectedly out of nowhere.”

“Just listen. The King Spike I served is the kind of idiot King who pushes his way and charges forward to the front lines during a war. He always rush out recklessly, he’s the so-called muscle-head.”

“Y, yes.”

I can’t understand what he’s talking about.

But I understand the hardships that became inevitable for the Royal Guard Knights after being forced to join the front lines.

Even so, for Grandfather to bad-mouth him like this...

In other words...?

“In other words, the Order of the Royal Guards and Intelligence Department became a necessity for the survival of King who’s constantly in the front lines. In

case of the intelligence Department, they gather every kind of information like the enemy's weak point and the strengths and weaknesses of the general leading them, how to fight with the least casualties and furthermore, they also they also contemplates the strategy to be used. They're always busy finding methods to prevent the war beforehand. They really had a hard time just so the King wouldn't die."

I see.

But if the King handles the military affairs then wouldn't he find it hard to deal with information, too?

The image of an intelligent aide came to my mind in that situation.

"Isn't there someone like an Advisor? Say, something like a Prime Minister?"

"Something like that is unnecessary. Even if Spike doesn't think deeply about things, he's the kind of guy who has capable judgement and intuition to given situations, he's also a good judge of character. You can say he's an extraordinary King if he just stop his habit of standing out in the battlefield. Actually, there was a Prime Minister who happened to be Human Supremist but he was banished immediately after accession. The Prime Minister post was abolished after that and a rough framework of a political policy was passed so that King Spike can make decisions by himself based on the Intelligence Department's report."

In short, it's not because King Spike is not intelligent but because he thinks it's a pain to use his head.

He must be the muscle-head type.

So the Intelligence Department is substantially playing the role of Prime Minister.

The Intelligence Department collect everything necessary to arrive to a decision, moreover they conduct discussions to narrow down the choices then present the method they squeezed out to the King.

It seems like a very busy department.

The former Prime Minister is an advocate of the ideology that the Human Race is supreme above all others, the only race loved by God. He is someone who

believes that those races other than Humans must be ostracized.

The neighboring country, Dao Empire, have many people like that. I'm sure they're following Baal's religion.

There are rumors that the political dispute this time is because First Princess Lily-sama opposed First Prince Edgar's ideology about Human Race's supremacy. Second Prince Caryl-sama seems like he doesn't want to be the King.

By the way, our country has the most varied races in the whole continent so I don't want to imagine what will happen to our country if the First Prince succeeds the throne.

"We were talking about the Intelligence Department, right? Let's go back to the matter at hand. I was summoned to get enlisted as an ally due to public sentiment. And so, Cathy is going as my substitute but you don't have any records of achievements and fame. Do you understand?"

I nodded in agreement.

I've always been in the mountains, so it's only natural.

"Then we'll talk about the main issue. Keep selling favors all throughout several places before you arrive at the royal Capital. Just showing your combat strength by exterminating monsters and bandits is enough. At any rate, you need to stand out."

Oh!?

I gradually predicted his thoughts.

At last, I understood the significance why he mentioned the Intelligence Department.

I spoke to confirm my suspicions.

"Afterwards, the Intelligence Department can spread rumors all over the country about me being the Sword Saint's disciple. Of course, the rumors will be exaggerated."

Isn't that right?

When I said so, I looked at Grandfather and saw him grinning with his teeth

visible.

It seems like I'm right.

"Right. It's easy to spread rumors which blend truth and falsehoods. Handling rumors like that is the Intelligence Department's expertise. Besides, rumors about your appearance and strength will still spread even if we don't do anything."

"Certainly, this hair and eye color will surely make me stand out."

I replied while lifting up some of my hair.

My hair and eye color is deep red.

Grandfather told me before that it's an unusual color.

"That's also right, or rather... it's not only that."

Haaaa~ I sighed.

Whyyy?

"Well, it would be fine. Cathy, introduce yourself with my family name later. I'm the only member of the Myers House so it would probably spread rumors. I've already told Spike about it."

"Your... family name? Is it a countermeasure against harassment from nobles?"

I recalled the thing about family names.

"Yes, that's it. This political strife, all the enemies who tried to take me down before joined the First Prince's faction. But this situation will be settled with dominance, so there will be opportunities where they can lose even if they're nobles."

In short, I only have to win... is that it?

I don't have enough confidence but I want to do everything I can.

"But is this really fine? We're not really biologically related, so claiming that family name is..."

"Of course it's fine. Even if we're not connected by blood you are still my

disciple, above anything else, you're my important granddaughter. So puff up your chest in pride when you introduce yourself with that name, got it?!"

————— ! !

So sly. Doing a surprise attack like that.

Even though just knowing that I'm important to him is enough, hearing those words made the corner of my eyes become hot.

The memories of us living together whirled around my mind.

My vision blurred.

"Yes... yes, Grandfather!"

Grandfather smiled gently.

Like this, from being just merely Cathia, I became Cathia Myers on the day of my departure.

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5. Encounter

The magic in this world is roughly separated into two.

First is the typical image of a magician in my past life, – that is, a mage who use magic in the rearguard.

There are four attributes – earth, water, fire and wind – and they are classified in ranks respectively – Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced, Master – and this kind of magic doesn't have a proper name.

The reason this magic doesn't have a name is because magic chants don't exist. If the person himself has the right attribute and sufficient amount of Mana*, it's possible to invoke magic that matches his mental image as long as he concentrates properly.

All creatures in this world have Mana, but there are differences in each person's attribute. There are people without any attributes, too.

Those who possess one attribute is called 『Single』, then 『Double』 and 『Triple』 for two and three attributes respectively and someone who can use all four is called a 『Mental Master』.

Incidentally, I'm a 『Single Fire』, and Grandfather is unattributed.

When it turned out that I can only use fire magic, Grandfather said...

“Doesn't it fit your appearance perfectly? Rather, it makes sense that you have that appearance.”

...or so he said. This world has the same mentality that red = fire. He said it so simply that I wasn't convinced.

The second magic is something that the unattributed soldiers in the vanguard

mainly use, that is the 『Aura』. A name was given to it since there's only one kind of it.

This is standard magic for someone who fights in close combat that strengthens physical ability and gives magic resistance, and it can be said that this is a kind of Secret Arts.

It's possible to use it in weapons and armors as long as they have contact with the body, and the effect of reinforcement is proportional to the quality of material.

The rank division is also the same as the rearguard magic. Grandfather is an 『Aura Master』.

The amount of Mana used determines the efficiency of the phenomenon's actualization when it comes to the rearguard attribute magic.

On the other hand, for Aura, the density of magic wrapped around the body is proportional to the Mana amount.

It can be judged by using a magic tool similar to a speed gun in my previous life.

This is the silhouette of a person who came from the same world as me...

.....

It's entirely unrelated to the current situation, but I just reviewed this world's magic!

I cried after feeling shaken, thinking how I became an orphaned child. After being reincarnated and having a woman's body, I feel like my emotions are even more easily shaken. When I was a man in my previous life, I had an indifferent personality.

Anyhow, I've finally calmed down.

I took a deep breath one more time.

Perhaps because he wants to confirm my state, Grandfather began to talk.

"We'll go to Zack's house first when we arrive to the village. Is that fine?"

It seems like he won't mentioned that I cried.

What a gentleman....

I was thankful, so I decided to get on the conversation just as it is.

“It’s fine. I also need to say goodbye to the village mayor.”

I want to see the house where grandfather will move into.

The time could be said that it’s still not yet early morning, but it will be all right because mornings in the village start early.

After going down the mountain for a while, I sensed something unusual.

“...Grandfather.”

I heard the rustling of the grass as if something is advancing, and felt an approaching presence.

It is a monster that is aggressively heading towards humans.

“Hmm, there are two of them. From the sound, it seems like they’re four-legged monsters.”

I looked towards the direction of the presence and confirmed it when the thicket shook.

As if the monster noticed the beings en route, it sped up while approaching here.

I drew a sword.

I prepared the unnamed Black Sword (temporary name) I received a while ago on my right hand and held the main gauge in a backhand grip using my left hand.

— Two wild boars with bloodshot eyes let out a humping *fugofugo* sound from their nose while running in a single file.

A Wild Boar is a demonized boar. Its tusks greatly jut out forward.

There are many demonized animals and plants in this world. However, the caused of their Demonization is unknown.

It’s difficult to investigate it spontaneously as there is a tendency that the places of their occurrence are numerous.

“Grandfather, I will...”

I urged Grandfather to step back.

However—

“No, I’ll take one of them.”

... he had an expression that he won’t listen even if I disagree.

I am not worried that he’ll lose at all, but will his hips be alright...?

I put on『Aura』.

—— The Wild Boar started to charge.

“Yo!”

The main gauge held by my left arm strengthened with Aura warding off the incoming tusk...

“Hah!”

Then I hammered in the black sword made with orichalcum into its neck using my right hand!

Suddenly, what came to my arm was the feeling of no resistance at all.

—— I missed!?

When I turned back to confirm in panic, the decapitated head of the Wild Boar that was hollowed out rolled on the ground.

... Apparently, it seems like it was too sharp.

I became speechless.

However, I’ll lose my arm strength eventually if I rely too much on this sword.

Grandfather ——

“...What’s wrong? You’re not going to attack?”

The wild boar with low intelligence cowered in front of Grandfather who’s overpowered.

A beautiful Aura which is several steps higher than me in proficiency wrapped around his body without hesitation.

The wild boar that was driven to a corner chose to recklessly advance forward.

“Fumu~”

Grandfather loosely dodged sideways while unsheathing a sword from the [cane] and the moment the wild boar crossed paths with him, he cut off its legs with the sword.

It’s Grandfather’s specialized weapon, the so-called Shikomi Katana, a slender sword also called Swordstick [/cane sword].

“Grandfather, are you alright?”

“What, a demon** of this level——”

“No, that’s not it.”

“Uh?”

“You’re sweating too much...”

“.....”

It’s painful after all, isn’t it? Your hips...

I gathered the dead Wild Boars in one place. Let’s ask a villager to collect them later. Of course, the meat of these guys can be eaten. They don’t have poison and they’re safe even if they transform into a demon. The fur is hard, but it’s usable if processed well. Unintentionally, they turned into a present for the village.

“Grandfather~ did the pain settle?”

“Aye, I’m already fine.”

Grandfather propped one hand in the tree trunk then used his other hand to rub the affected part, as he turned towards my direction.

The Kaisa Village is almost nearby.

We finished our descent from the mountain, and a wall made of earth came into view. The village’s defensive wall is man-made by several people who can use earth magic. The height is approximately 3 meters. The gate is beside the main road so you can’t take a detour or sneak around the mountain.

I saw the gate when I walked along the wall.

A villager whose face I recognize is keeping watch before the gate.

He notice us so I called out.

“Good morning.”

““Morning, Cathia. Tim-san, good morning. Do you have some business with the mayor?”

Tim is Grandfather’s name, his full name is Tim Myers.

Grandfather replied.

“Well, something like that. Please open the gate. Also, dead Wild Boars are lying in a spot just a little above the mountain so please retrieve it later.”

“Oh! Wild Boar, is it? Thank you very much as always, we’ll do it immediately.”

While saying those words, he opened the iron gate and we entered inside.

The mayor’s house is located just a short distance inside village.

We went ahead inside the village, looking at the peaceful agricultural village’s state while occasionally exchanging greetings.

Arriving at the mayor’s house, I called out after hitting the door knocker.

“Good morning, it’s Tim and Cathia. Is Zack-san around?”

I hear a sound from inside while waiting for a while, then the door opened.

“Yes-?”

A woman with a gentle atmosphere came out and met us.

It’s Hana-san, Zack-san’s wife.

If I remember correctly, she’s 38 years old.

“Oh, Tim-san and Cathia-chan, please come in! My husband left for a while so please wait since he’ll come back anytime soon.”

“Cathy, let’s accept her kind offer.”

“Yes. Then, pardon us for intruding.”

It seems like Zack-san is not present.

We decided to wait inside the house.

Note:

* Maryoku, *i.e.* magic power will be shortened to Mana.

** Mamono (魔物) is a word used to refer to RPG monsters. For normal ones, I'll address them as monsters while demonized ones will be called demons in the future. This is subject to change, as there is a possibility of the existence of demon race.

Sword Saint's Disciple - Volume 1 - Chapter 6

6. Village Mayor's House

Zack-san's house, rather, should I say mansion?

The mansion is huge.

It's not because his power as a village mayor is strong, but because he accommodates merchants and the territory's government officials if they have business here, so he has a fairly large parlor room.

By the way, the Kaisa Village is affiliated under the territory called Raza.

The village mayor's home is made of rough stones, and the finer parts are manually made using earth magic.

It is roughly the same as the method of piling up stones then cementing it in my previous life.

However, it's difficult to build the finer parts using magic.

The surface is not done smoothly, too.

If one builds a house by using only magic, superhuman magic power and image control is necessary.

As for the earth wall of the village a while ago, the finishing touches were done with manual labor.

Going back to the topic, we are in the parlor room right now.

Hannah-san served chamomile tea.

... Yeah, it has a nice smell.

It's also a specialty of this village and it's cultivated extensively.

It is to the extent that merchants formed a trading group for it.

Humidity tends to collect easily because of the earth wall around the village, and wind magic plays a large part in cultivation.

The plants and animals' ecology in this world is similar to that of my previous life.

Well, maybe because the one who named them is also a resident of my previous world.

I was drinking my tea when suddenly, the door of the parlor forcefully opened.

A girl with braided chesnut-colored hair and a face similar to Hannah-san appeared.

"Cathy! At least greet me if you visit!"

It was Rose, who is the daughter of the village mayor and Hannah-san.

She's fifteen years old.

Hannah-san looked slightly embarrassed when she saw that display.

"Rose, those are bad manners."

"Ah, sorry Mom. Good morning, Tim-san. Cathy, too."

... Her appearance resembles Hannah-san's, but Rose is very lively.

"Hmm, Good morning Rose. We'll intrude for a while."

Grandfather responded to her greeting.

"Morning Rose."

I returned an answer, too.

But Rose glared daggers at me when she saw my appearance.

What is it?

"Cathy, your hair is messy! Come here right at this moment! Tim-san, I'll borrow Cathy for a while!"

"Oh, have at her."

...Ah, I usually comb my hair after training, but I forgot to do it today since I

was in a hurry.

By the way, the comb was something I received (more like, given by force) from Rose.

This friend that is two years my junior is very particular about my appearance for some reason.

Also, Grandfather, Rose.

I'm not a thing, you know?

I was dragged into Rose's room by force.

We entered Rose's room which is very feminine and had a lot of small articles unlike my room.

"Good grief, Cathy..."

While saying that remark, I was forcibly seated into the chair and had my hair combed.

It's ticklish when another person does it.

"Sorry, Rose. But I really just forgot it today..."

"Didn't you say the same thing before!?"

"I-is that so?"

My plan is... to do it as little as possible.

"Wasting such a beautiful red hair likes this. Do it properly, you're a woman. And you're also older than me..."

Rose complained.

On the contrary, this girl became a reliable big-sister type before I knew it.

And she's younger, too.

Could this be my fault?

Even so, I'm a man inside.

"It's a little long, isn't it? Why don't we tie it behind?"

"Ah, yes."

My long hair which reached my lower back was tied into a ponytail.

It's seems like it's easy to move like this so it's probably better.

I expressed my thanks meekly.

"Thanks, Rose."

Rose averts her face in a huff and says.

"This much is nothing."

...Oh?

Are you embarrassed?

You're embarrassed, aren't you?

Hmm? Hmm?

——— When I sneaked around to see her face, I got slapped with a picture frame.

Twenty minutes later, Zack-san came back.

The place is in the parlor room.

A lot of humans in this country have hair that are shades of brown.

Zack-san has dark brown hair mixed in with graying hair, and is a kind person who always has a troubled expression.

His physique is good because contrary to his appearance, he doesn't only lead the village but can also be seen doing farm work with the villagers.

The result is that the village people adores him.

If I am not mistaken, he should be in his late 40's.

He is also the only person in the village who knows Grandfather's history very well.

Other villagers only know that Grandfather was someone from the military.

Consequently, the three of us are having a talk right now.

We talk about the letter from the Royal Capital and that I will be a substitute.

“I see... the renowned title Sword Saint hasn’t weakened yet, is that it?”

That was Zack-san’s first reaction.

Zack-san should have seen Grandfather at the prime of his life, nevertheless it seems like the figure that kicked around hordes of demons is still branded to his eyes.

“I understand. Cathia-san, please do your preparations in the village as much as you can. However, Rose might feel lonely with this...”

“Thank you very much, Zack-san. That’s right... Grandfather, the situation can’t be explained to Rose after all?”

“No, I don’t mind. Your hometown will eventually be leaked once you stand out. You’ll be doubted if you conceal your origins. Besides, the Raza territory’s lord is under the First Princess’ faction. A soldier was already requested from them. Even if the First Prince’s faction did something, you’ll be alright to some extent. It’s not possible for everyone to know, but you can talk to Rose about it.”

???

I feel uneasy about how fast the preparations were made.

“A soldier was already requested even if the letter from the Royal Capital arrived just yesterday?”

“Ah, sorry. I didn’t tell you about it. It was a formal request from the royal family so the letter stood out since it was foreign. The practical talk between the Intelligence Department and Raza territory was already finished.”

... It seems like they predicted that the summon won’t be declined.

It was a very drastic ex-post facto approval.

Well, grandfather will go even if I stopped him by force, so I think that it’s better that I go instead when I realized that!

“Then I’ll go talk to Rose later.”

It doesn’t appear like they’re worried about me leaving the village.

The remaining talk was about the matter of Grandfather’s new home.

“Zack-san, where will Grandfather live?”

Zack-san answer with a broad smile.

“Of course, it will be in my house!”

Grandfather was confused.

“Wait, wait, I’m asking you! Isn’t there another vacant house somewhere!?”

“Isn’t it just natural? Letting of Tim-san live in another house is unacceptable!”

“But you see, I can’t bother you that much... You say something too, Cathy.”

So you’re going to leave it to me?

Well then.

“Isn’t it fine, Grandfather? If Zack-san, Hannah-san and Rose is with you then I will be relieved.”

These are my true feelings.

Zack-san also insisted it when he got my approval.

“That’s right! Please don’t hold back. The favors that this village received from Tim-san would be returned this way, wouldn’t it?!”

Reclamation of agricultural lands in this world means putting one’s life at risk and constantly fighting with monsters.

That’s just how much Zack-san feels debt of gratitude towards Grandfather who was single-handedly responsible for that.

Grandfather groaned a little so I was worried, but he soon gave in.

“...Then, I will be under your care. Thank you, Zack.”

Grandfather’s life from now on seems like it will be alright.

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7. Departure

The next agenda is talking to the liaison who stayed here.

It appears like he is an Intelligence Department member from what Grandfather told me.

He was staying at a village mayor's house, so he was guided to the parlor room.

If I had to say my impression of him in one word it would be 'ordinary'.

His hair is brown. There's nothing like a mustache or scar in his face.

If he slipped into a crowd, it feels like he wouldn't be found anymore.

"Hello, Cathia-dono. It has been since yesterday."

With the man's remark, I finally realized the fact that the man who handed me the letter yesterday is, without a doubt, the man in front of me.

Amazing, Intelligence Department!

"We cannot introduce ourselves by our name. That being the case, please address me as A-san, B-san, Nanashi-san or any other name you prefer."

<Note: Nanashi (ナナシ) means 'nameless'.>

"Haa *sigh*... then I'll call you Nanashi-san."

The one I prefer the most? Then I'll decide to call him Nanashi-san.

Nanashi-san turned towards Grandfather to catch his attention.

"Will you rely on her after all? Sword Saint-dono."

"Hmm. The person herself already gave her acknowledgment."

“That easily, huh? Is it fine to send your disciple to her death just like that? I won’t take responsibility even if her beautiful face is damaged.”

My impression of his appearance-changing ability is great, but Nanashi-san is unexpectedly talkative.

To just blurt out what he’s thinking without filtering them...

Will this person be alright?

“I don’t mind it. I have confidence in Cathy. There will be no problem.”

Grandfather replied in an unfazed manner.

Are you making me cry again?! Even so, I won’t cry!

However, this is the first time I learned that the feeling of having other people rely on me is this pleasant.

Oops, I betrayed my innermost thoughts.

Restraint! Restraint!

Nanashi-san answered with a shrug of his shoulders.

It’s like a sarcastic gesture.

“That’s excellent. Then, I will leave earlier and get in touch with other intelligence agents. I will leave the rest to Neil-kun who will be your guard and guide. Excuse me.”

And so, he left just like that.

Guide? Who will it be?

There was immediately a knock at the door.

“Please excuse me!”

After being answered “by all means,” a slightly tall young man entered, he seems like the type to be overly serious in expressing his opinions.

I left my seat for the time being to meet him.

“I am a member of the Kingdom’s Knight Order, Neil Raza! By the order of the Former King Spike, I have been appointed as your guide to the Royal Capital!”

How should I say it? He's too tense and stiff.

A tense person moving their feet and hands simultaneously, it's the first time I've seen it in reality.

The young man is approximately 180 cm tall, and his auburn (brown with tinge of red) hair is cut short.

His face is well-proportioned, but I get the impression that it's unrefined in some respects.

As for his clothes, he's wearing a light armor with white as the base color.

Is it the equipment of the Knight Order?

Grandfather couldn't stand it any longer and called out to him.

"O-ou. You're too stiff, young man. You do not need to be that nervous, it's fine."

"Are you Sword Saint-sama?! It is an honor to meet you! Ha-handshake! No matter what!"

The outcome... the situation deteriorated even more.

Apparently, he's a fan of Grandfather.

I'm being left out.

I waited for him to calm down but it doesn't seem like he'll do.

"Please pardon my rudeness..."

He's finally in a condition where he can finally talk.

Everyone is standing.

Grandfather is a little amazed.

"Hmm... being my disciple's guide, I'm entrusting it to you."

"I-Please leave it to me!"

It appears like Grandfather wanted to say something more, but he settled with that brief remark.

He looks like the type to be earnest and I think that kind of personality is great.

Neil-san turned to me at last.

And then, his expression stiffened when he saw my face.

As if in a daze, his line of sight traveled downwards and then after having looked until my feet, he returned his gaze to my face.

— Neil-san's face is dyed red.

W-what is it!?

For the time being, let's greet him with a smile.

"Nice to meet you, Neil-san. I am Cathia Myers, Tim's disciple."

"I heard it was a woman but... this... P-please pardon my impoliteness! I look forward to working with you!"

His appearance is weird but he returned his greetings properly so I'm sure he's fine.

[Neil's POV]

Having met the legendary Sword Saint, my chest is full.

I have always been yearning for the one named Sword Saint after reading a book about the Sword Saint's heroic tales during my childhood.

Even if the person himself will not be able to come to the Royal Capital in this mission, I think just seeing a glimpse of him is an extremely good fortune. How long have I been looking forward to this day?

I think I won't be able to forget the feeling of his hand during that handshake throughout my life.

My hands have also swing the sword and I take pride of my calloused hands, but the hands of Tim-sama that I grasped is something beyond words.

Continually swinging the sword, it's a hand that specialized in wielding the sword.

Even without words, that hand is enough to point out how inexperienced I am.

I apologized for being excessively excited, and finally looked at Cathia-san, the

Sword Saint's disciple.

At that instant, I felt my consciousness fled and blink a few more times.

— In that place is a stunning beautiful woman[/bijo].

She is about 10 cm lower than me in height.

Her fiery red hair is tied in a ponytail.

Fair skin and slitted eyes in a shade similar to her hair, like rubies giving off a bewitching charm.

Long lashes decorates their borders.

Straight-bridged nose where under, soft-looking lips can be seen.

My line of sight moved downward, and I know that under the leather armor are big chests and lean waist, and I can see her long legs.

When I returned my gaze to her face, I knew the my face became hot.

Then, she showed a soft smile that seems unimaginable for that dignified appearance, and greeted me.

“Nice to meet you, Neil-san. I am Cathia Myers, Tim's disciple.”

That expression that is intensely different from her appearance made me even more confused.

I wonder what kind of face I'm making right now?

Arriving at that stage, I finally realized that I've been pointing a rude gaze towards a woman.

“I heard that it's a woman but... this...”

I did not imagine her to be such a beautiful woman.

“...P-please pardon my impoliteness! I look forward to working with you!”

I somehow managed to squeeze out words of apology and self-introduction.

[Cathia's POV]

It's already dark in the village when I finished my preparations for the journey.

I will be staying at the Village Mayor's house today and will be departing

tomorrow.

Zack-san hosted a small parting feast.

He was going to invite others from the village but I stopped him since it's embarrassing.

The people who will see me off tomorrow is Zack-san and his family and Grandfather.

I told Rosa the rough outline of the situation.

She had a calm expression but is it just my imagination that she's somehow dispirited?

The next morning.

We are in front of the village gate accompanied by two horses.

Neil-san is paying regard as he wait slightly away from us.

It is Zack-san who first talked.

"Cathia-san, if you ever fail, please come home properly. Friends are more important to the people in this village than the political affairs in the Royal Capital."

Those are Zack-san's kind words.

"Yes," I returned a reply.

Following that, Hannah-san...

"Cathia-chan, take care of your health. You can't catch a cold, okay?"

... she said that in her gentle voice like usual.

I also properly answered her.

As for Rose...

"Cathy, comb your hair neatly, alright? Also, staying up late at night is a powerful enemy of a beautiful woman. Take a balance meal, too. And then... and then..."

Though she kept on talking rapidly, she can't continue her words anymore.

I gently hugged Rose whose eyes are brimmed with tears.

"I'll come back no matter what, so wait for me okay?"

"Yeah... yeah... I'll wait, always."

Her tears haven't stop yet but I'm sure she'll be alright.

That is because Zack-san and Hannah-san, Grandfather and the everyone in the village is there for her.

Lastly, it's a brief remark from Grandfather.

"I have nothing to say. Go forth, my grandchild!"

<Note: Ittekoi, lit. "go and come back." Another form of itterasshai, *i.e.* to leave and come back shortly.> I spontaneously straightened my back.

I firmly look ahead.

"Yes, Grandfather! See you later!"

Thus, I embarked on a journey from the Kaisa Village and Grandfather's side.

Sword Saint's Disciple - Volume 2 - Chapter 1

2-1. History of the country's founding and the first destination

It's been quite a time since we left the village.

Currently, we let the horses take a break in an open space by the highway.

... However, there is hardly any conversation.

It's extremely awkward.

Neil-san occasionally looks at my direction, but he averts his eyes in a rush when our eyes meet.

Did I do something wrong?

I can't do anything even if I worry about it so I brought up the conversation by myself.

"Neil-san, why don't we sit down and take a rest for the time being?"

I'll sit down first.

The grass is soft and dry so there's no problem about it.

I sat down in seiza.

<Note: Japanese' formal style of sitting down.>

"Ah, yes. ——You have a peculiar way of sitting."

He also started talking and showed a relieved expression.

It appears like he felt awkward, too.

"This way of sitting is called seiza. I can stretch my back straight so it feels pleasant."

After riding on a horse, I feel that lessening the burden of my waist is good. I only rode the horse a few times in the village so I am not used to it.

“Seiza, is it? I will give it a try.”

Neil-san sat down beside me while mimicking my position.

“M-my knee hurts. So much. But it certainly lets me stretch my back.”

You don’t need to force yourself to sit down like the way I do.

Neil-san is grimacing but he diligently sat in seiza. He might have a soft body.

Uhm, what should I talk about?

At times like this, it’s good to ask a question that’s easy to answer. At least, that’s what I read from a book in my previous life.

Alright.

“Uhm, Neil-san. What would be our first destination?”

I decided to start the conversation through a light confirmation.

Neil-san immediately responded as if he also disliked the silence.

“Yes, we will enter the Town of Raza first and register in the Garshcia Soldier Guild.”

An unfamiliar word came out.

Soldier Guild?

Garshcia is the name of this country.

Garshcia Kingdom.

Is the group we will enter managed by the kingdom?

“I am sorry for my ignorance, but what do you mean by Soldier Guild?”

“Ah, I am sorry, too. Sword Saint-sama told me to explain about common sense[/general knowledge].”

I lived my life in the mountains so something like that was unnecessary. It can’t be helped.

That doesn’t mean I am an idiot.

Well then, let’s ask Neil-san about various things.

“Sensei, please take care of me.”

“Se-sensei? Such a great thing... Well, what does Cathia-san know about the country of Garshcia?”

I roughly know the history.

But, is that necessary to explain about the Soldier Guild?

“If I am not mistaken, Garshcia once belong to the eastern territory of the Dao Empire and played a central role, but it became independent, right?”

Should I remember the things related to the country’s geography for the time being?

The Dao Empire has a great dominion over the western region of this continent. The north’s center is the country of Werebeasts, in the central vicinity of the continent is the Garshcia Country, the southern part is the Elves’ country, and in the further south is the country of Dwarves.

The shape is that our country is stuck between north and south. <Note: Actual term is dango-shaped.>

This unnatural allocation of countries is the outcome of Garshcia’s dispossession from Dao Empire, which seeks to expand its territory.

The eastern part of the continent is an undeveloped area, and the center was also once a back-country full of demons.

It is the reason why humanity’s sphere of living gathered in the west of the continent.

The Dao Empire, with the exception of Humans, drove other races to the east. Then they snatched away the reclaimed lands afterwards.

During this period, cooperative relationship between humans and other races is not widely imposed. I believe this is the result of the Empire’s constant schemes to provoke alienation.

However, the situation completely changed when the Garshcia territory in the east of Dao Empire revolted.

“Yes. The humans who opposed Baal’s religion, which is Dao Empire’s state religion, gathered at the Garschia territory. They made an alliance with the three other countries apart from Dao Empire, and achieved independence. It’s been about a hundred years since then.” (Neil) The eastern territory became the forefront of invasion. Not all Humans were tainted with the religion. When the snatching of other people’s cleared lands continued not unlike a thief, these Humans felt guilty and their hearts were worn down.

I can sympathize with their feelings when they took drastic actions to become independent.

“But they weren’t able to become allies properly, were they? It was a period when the enemy is the Human race.” (Cathia) Other races hated the exclusive disposition of Baal’s religion. They entered a state of war, and the mental image became the worst.

“That is right. However, this country failed to defend the invasion since they needed to reclaim lands in order to guarantee their daily lives, so the country became even more impoverished. Under that circumstances, the Garschia territory defended against the march of the Empire for the second time. They accepted a lot of refugees regardless of their races. By that sequence of events, it became the age when several races in the continent lead to the creation of the country with the most varied races. The other countries saw Garschia’s attitude and defense capabilities so they accepted the alliance. Thus, the anti-Empire organization, Shikoku Alliance was made.”

<Note: Shikoku, literally Four Countries. This actually exists as Four Provinces of Japan. Please help me think of a better name.> I am curious how Garschia territory prevented the attack of the Empire, but enough of that.

The Baal religion was treated as a bad example and became the foundation of friendship between races.

The Shikoku Alliance of Garschia ▪ Werebeast ▪ Elf ▪ Dwarf continues at present. The Dao Empire is so powerful that it can still maintain its national strength even when four countries opposed it.

Neil-san’s explanation continued.

“Let us return to the topic. The majority of the population of Garschia established it as a country, but they were refugees who were worn out from fighting. Even if the refugees were accepted, it was not easy for them to shake off the sense of distrust towards the Human Race. The number of Garschia’s military strength became insufficient compared to its citizens.”

It may be natural considering the circumstances.

When the trust is low, the soldiers may just be thrown away after they are used by the Human Race. What more if they were assigned together in the particularly severe battlefield? Suspicion will follow around.

“So it became a guild?”

Judging from the flow of the story, it appears to be like this.

“Yes. There is still no good idea to solve such emotional aspect at the moment. Since the trust in the country is low, military service became a business instead of an obligation. Guilds were opened in various places to guard against demons.”

Desire is instigated with the high reward, and a sense of security without compulsion can be obtained at the same time.

Refugees who are likely to be poor can also acquire rewards.

You can refuse military service by your judgement, isn't this an amazing thing?

“Then if it's done like that, they're temporary soldiers? Is that how they are treated?”

“Yes. They will apply if the reward is enough and will be drafted as temporary soldiers and mercenaries, it unexpectedly attracted a lot of people.”

The good points are that there are many reserve troops and maintenance costs are low.

As for the demerit, wouldn't the problem be reflected in the soldier's skills?

“In a real battlefield, do they have proper command over the soldiers?”

“There was in the past, but at present, it is necessary for them to have minimum war training that are regularly done in each guild. Participation is not obligatory but there are many participants since there are also rewards for this.”

Is that really fine?

It may be alright since this country is still like this.

Seeing my question interrupt him, Neil-san shifted to a detailed explanation of the guild.

“Except during a war, the country and feudal lords occasionally meditates to employ mercenaries in case of insufficient soldiers. It is often related to demon extermination and peace and order maintenance. Then the soldiers have ranks. Someone with a high rank gets more than the basic reward. As for mercenaries, the level of confidence from merchants and others who give personal commissions, becomes the indicator. Accepting requests are limited by ranks. Furthermore, they have preferential treatment like tax exemption. They have the freedom to accept these or not. In exchange, those who receive tax exemption

needs to go to the battlefield.”

Most of the budget appears to go to the guild for general armaments. Competition is fueled by ranks. This country’s army tends to heighten morale using rewards rather than commands.

In addition, even commoners can place requests through the guild as long as they can pay the a reward.

“With these details, our country at present can mobilize in case of an emergency, that is why temporary soldiers and mercenaries compose the majority of the army’s division. The section of the country that manages that is the Soldier Guild. It is an obligation for temporary soldiers and mercenaries to register here. To manage all of the troops, the country’s army and each territory’s forces also register here.”

Then we will go there to register after this, he said.

Indeed, the question I have been wondering about is now settled with his discussion about the guild.

The military power of the nation is not very great, so gathering support became important in the current throne contention.

Even if this is country is said to be under monarchy, the citizens have a lot of power.

At the same time, a new doubt came to my mind.

Now that I learned what’s happening behind the scenes, it seems improbable for the First Prince Edgar – who is tainted with Baal’s religion – to win, however... I also think that this country’s structure is strange.

What are the nobles’ intentions for supporting that?

U~mu.

“I understand about the Soldier Guild. Which reminds me, how will they handle me? Will I be a part of the nation’s military?”

It’s quite unlikely that I, who is received summons to a royal convention, will be affiliated to other groups.

“I am sure you will be a soldier under the national military. The former King Spike handed a letter of introduction for the guild so I do not think you will be a common soldier... but I am unclear on the specifics.”

Neil-san says while folding his arms in a brooding gesture.

“Then, we have no choice but to go. I made you give a very long explanation, huh? I’m sorry... Rather, thanks. Thank you very much.”

“No! It was me who did not pay attention... I am very sorry.”

He seems to be talking about the stiff atmosphere from before.

He becomes normal if there is a conversation, this person doesn’t look like the type to create a special wall.

Speaking of that.

“Are there any reasons for that?”

It would be better to hear it ahead of time.
For the future.

“The truth is... I have an older sister[/ane], uhm...”

The talk went into an unexpected direction.
Older sister[/onee-san]?

“What is it?”

I asked again, and he answered while scratching his cheeks, appearing embarrassed.

“It’s embarrassing but, she always ordered me around when I was small. Should I say my older sister has a strong-willed appearance? She has unyielding eyes so... when I see women who appear to have strong nature, I shrink back.”

Hmmm, in other words.

“Did you think I was obstinate from the way I look?”

Certainly, doesn’t the present me have slanted, villainess-like eyes[/tsurime]?
It may be that.

I do not think that deeply about my appearance.
It’s because I felt sad during my previous life.

In my previous existence, I thought my appearance ranked at the middle of the top, but I was not popular at all.

...I was not popular.

Self-evaluation tends to become overly optimistic.

When I boldly asked a younger female cousin who dropped by my parents' home, she ranked my appearance in the lower middle.

"Lower middle! I do not dislike it but—"

Because you know.

...I want to cry.

That follow-up made me feel like crying even more.

Isn't lower middle plainly the reserves!?

"U-uhm, were you offended?"

Oops, I just recalled an unpleasant thing.

"No, I do not mind."

It's that, isn't it?

"Sorry. I only showed discourtesy during our meeting before... Cathia-san's demeanor is soft unlike your appearance. I understand that you are different from my older sister."

He said that according to his older sister's appearance.

When he mentioned my demeanor is soft, should I be relieved that I am properly behaving like lady?

"It's fine. I completely understood the reason."

From the way he said it like it's something difficult to speak about, Neil-san might be a very honest man.

"Thank you very much— well, that is not the only reason though."

He whispered half of the sentence.

But, I perfectly heard it.

There's another reason?

I can't stop thinking about it! <Note: Chitanda Eru reference.>

“There is something else? Please tell me about it?”

I have brought my face closer before I knew it.

Oh, too close.

I took some distance away.

Neil-san’s face is dyed red, and I heard him speak in a whisper, as if it was caused by shyness.

“N-no! It is of no concern!”

“Why are you dodging the question!? Please tell me if I did something strange! I was brought up in the mountains so I don’t know the ways of the world!”

“It’s not strange! ...I am the one at fault. I do not have immunity against beaut– against women...”

?

He’s weak with women?

Is this because of his older sister?

In the end, I did not receive a clear answer.

Well.

It can’t be helped.

“Well, that is alright. Please inform me in the near future.”

Procrastination.

Let’s hear about it later.

“Ah, no...that...hahaha.”

His attitude make it seem like I was only deceived.

Oi!

Sword Saint's Disciple - Volume 2 - Chapter 2

2-2. Raza Town and Soldier Guild

The horses' rest is enough.
It's time to leave soon.

"Neil-san, shall we go soon?"

"Yes, I unders—ugh!" (Neil)

Neil-san staggered while trying to stand up.

"M-my legs are numb."

His legs fell asleep probably because he's unused to seiza.
He is crouching with both his hands on the ground.

"...It will be fine if you wait for them to recover."

However, that defenseless appearance.
My mischievous mind throbbed.

"Fufu~"

"What is it, Cathia-san? That evil smile..."

You cannot resist poking someone when you see his legs are numb, right?
Is it just me?

"That's right."

"S-stop—!!" (Neil)

I attacked his calf which he protected by his hands.
A good reaction indeed, I say.
This person is really the type that you can't help but tease.

“Then, let’s continue our travel, Neil-san.”

“So cruel, Cathia-san...”

I also think that I overdid it a little, but the atmosphere softened so everything turned out alright in the end.

We rode the horses and went onward the Raza Town.

We are likely to arrive before noon.

The territory of Raza is located at the eastern edge of the country. Raza Town is the central base of land reclamation, and also the accumulation, transportation, and division point of crops from neighboring villages. Military strength is necessary against monsters when reclaiming lands, so there were many mercenaries and soldiers sent as reinforcements from other territories.

Consequently, the scale of the Soldier Guild is also of some level. Neil-san explained until this point.

“Can you see it, Cathia-san? That is the Raza Town.”

Beyond the highway, the stone wall that surrounds the town came into view. Fortunately, we did not encounter any monsters on the way.

“A stone wall, huh? Kaisa Village has earth wall.”

“A stone wall is more durable, it also makes the scenery better. There is a small stone mountain nearby so they were brought from there.”

I see, there is also problem of materials.
Making something out of nothing isn’t possible even with magic.
For earth magic, one must pour their Mana into soil or stones.
The three other attributes also follow that rule in almost all situations.
Even if there is magic, the laws of physics are almost the same to the ones in my previous life.
I did not take up a Science course in my previous life so I am not very clear on the details.

“Young Master! Are you here to visit your parents? Who is that beauty!?”

We arrived in front the gates during the time I was thinking.
Among the two gatekeepers, the older male soldier greeted Neil-san.
‘Young Master’?
They appear to be acquaintances.
Oops, it’s impolite to stay astride the horse.
Let’s dismount.

“Please stop with the ‘young master’. I am with a guest from the Kaisa Village.
Can we pass?”

“By all means——— Open the gate!”

The lattice made of iron opened.

The size of the gate allows a carriage to pass by with room to spare.
Now we have to leave the horses in their custody.

We left the horses in the stable near the entrance.

I heard Neil-san being called as ‘Young Master’.
I have a prediction about it.

“Neil-san is the son of the Lord here after all?”

“Yes, that is right. I am the second son so I had to enter
the Knight Order in the Imperial Capital.”

Well, that’s right.
He introduced himself as Neil Raza.
I failed to hear it because of his behavior during our first meeting.

“Therefore, please stay at our manor house today. I will also introduce you to
my family.”

Manor house?
I never heard anything about our lodging place today.

“I thought for sure that we will stay at the barracks.”

“It will be at our house no matter what. You are a special guest, after all.”

Ah, his expression is similar to the one Zack-san showed before.
During the time Zack-san had a talk with Grandfather about his new home.

“Then, please take care of me...”

I realized that resistance is futile.

But a feudal lord, huh?

He is an aristocrat. In other words, a politician.

The type of people that I had no relation to in my previous life.

I’m a little nervous.

I have to get used to it now since I am meeting the royal family in the future.

Next task is going to the Soldier Guild.

We went there while I looked around the Raza Town.

There are several food stalls and buildings like warehouses where crops are accumulated.

Merchants are purchasing here and there, it’s quite lively.

I took a bite of the rye bread I bought since it’s inexpensive for lunch.

Where is the guild?

“We have arrived, Cathia-san. This is the Soldier Guild.”

There is the common crest on the entrance – a shield and two crossed swords.

Easy to understand is good, right?

The building is made of the stone and considerably large.

Inside, there is a bulletin board, reception and waiting room.

I can see desks lined up beyond the reception area, where other staff are working.

It looks more like a government office than what I expected.

Even though this world with magic is realistic, the fantasy impression is———

“Oh, if it isn’t Neil.”

The one with overflowing fantasy impression is a black-haired beauty with wolf(?) dog(?) ears atop her head, sitting at the reception area.

Probably wolf.

She has the tone of a handsome man.

Of course, there are no Werebeasts back in the village.

“...What are you doing, Branch Leader?”

She responded to Neil-san who had a perplexed expression.

The receptionist is the Branch Leader.

What the heck is that!?

“We are understaffed since the guys assigned on main jobs collapsed with cold. This is temporary. Then, what is your business?”

“We have a letter from the Royal Capital. You will understand once you read this.”

Neil-san took out the letter from his chest pocket and passed it to the Branch Leader.

“From the Royal Capital? ...This can’t be opened here. You guys, come sit here for a moment. That young miss[/ojou-chan] might be the person concerned.”

The Branch Leader stood from the chair.

With the help of a stick———

Cane?

The lower half of her body became visible from the counter.

Branch Leader doesn’t have a right leg.

“What are you surprised for? Is it your first time in the Soldier Guild? I am not the only one like this, you know?”

With her remark, I looked at other staff members. There was a one-handed person, a person with an eye injury, and I can see people with limp walked by as if it’s something that is a common occurrence.

I came up with a deduction as I thought about it———

“Are all the main staff injured soldiers?”

“Right answer. Ojou-chan, don’t you have a fairly good perception? You have excellent assessment and you also did not show any pity.”

It’s because I felt more surprised with the unexpected scene. There isn’t any staff who looked gloomy, it is a proof that they are proud of their battles.

Regardless of the consequence, there is no reason to pity them.

We were shown into a private room which seems to be the Branch Leader’s office.

Then, the Branch Leader opened the letter briefly scanned it.

“———Hmmm, I see. But to think that Sword Saint was living this nearby.”

She raised her head and suddenly threw the letter.

She declared that after she crossed her arms and faced here.

Every action of Branch Leader is so cool.

Can I call you ‘Anego’?

<Note: Anego literally means older sister. Usually used to refer to a yakuza boss’s wife. Or a strong female gangster.> “So in short, Ojou-chan only needs to register. After that, give her commissions that will make her stand out as much as possible. Then, I will leave the usually disliked and troublesome jobs to you.”

“Was there anything written about my affiliation?

It’s the question I thought before.

“No, there’s nothing. I have a prediction, but shall I explain it?”

“Yes, please.”

“It’s simple. If you gather enough reputation before reaching the capital, you will be delegated as the head of the Princess’s Royal Guards. If you fail to do so, you will be a common soldier until you stack up enough achievements.”

After considering the risk of failure, it seems like she came to that decision. It’s politically correct...is it?

“Therefore, you will be treated as a common soldier from the kingdom’s viewpoint after you register. But you have the Former King’s messenger Neil, so you are special. You will not be looked down even if you go to other territories.”

What a delicate situation.

It looks like I will have a hard time in the future if I do not do my best.

“Now then, you need to do a rank examination if you register. Go to the training grounds. Neil, guide her for me. I will follow afterwards.”

“Got it. Will Branch Leader watch personally?”

“That’s obvious. As a former soldier myself, I want to see the ability of the Sword Saint’s disciple.”

She has very high expectations.
I became tense.

The training area is an place similar to an open plaza, except it has a thick earth wall.

There is no roof.

Several soldiers are sparring with wooden weapons.

From children to old soldiers, even the races and genders vary. It's lively.

"Oh! Here you are! Ojou-chan's redhead is easy to spot, eh?"

Branch Leader came.

It appears like she made me her landmark.

This hair really stands out as expected.

After we entered the training area, we gathered a considerable number of gazes.

"Shall we start? First, show me your Aura."

Branch Leader set up the aforementioned speed gun, a Mana measuring instrument.

"Yes."

It doesn't seem to be a mock battle.

I grab ahold of the Mana flowing inside my body then wear it, such that my whole body is clad in it.

I have no weapon so there's a slight sense of discomfort.

"A beautiful and powerful Aura... how wonderful."

Branch Leader murmured.

The Aura I invoked out of my Mana reserve became visible.

"———Oooh!"

The measurement seems to have ended.

How is it?

"I'm astonished! The Master rank that can only be used by several people in the country? As expected of the Sword Saint's disciple."

<Note: Magic Ranks from Chapter 1-5 — Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced, Master.>

The spectators listening attentively became noisy.
H-how embarrassing.

“Branch Leader, why in such a loud voice———”

Branch Leader approached me using her crutch that looks like a cane.
She place a hand near my neck and whispered in a low voice.

“Half the reason is on purpose. You need to stand out hereafter, so you should get used to this much. Actually, just being able to use Master Level Aura is enough to be the talk of the town.”

Certainly, I cannot refute with what she said.
But she said ‘half’.

“How about the other half?”

“No, I was just exceedingly surprise. Normally, meeting a ‘Master’ in a lifetime is almost impossible.”

Exceedingly?
Well, never mind.

“What will be the next one? Is it magic?”

“What? Ojou-chan can also use magic?”

“I am a Single Fire only until Intermediate Level.”

“Then, I will examine it for the time being... is what I should say, but...”

Branch Manager looked around the vicinity.
Yes, I know what you want to say.

“The impact is weak after displaying Master Level Aura.”

That is natural.
It’s fine if I did it in reverse order.
However, we are in front of a public.

“That’s right——— Then, how about I show an original skill? Something with

a flashy appearance.”

I have one trick.

“Hou, I’m curious. Do you need a target?”

“Yes, a wooden one.”

A wooden scarecrow was prepared as I requested.

I prepared the wooden sword I borrowed.

“Fuu...” (*exhale)

I enveloped the sword in Mana.

Together with Aura, I mixed in another kind of Mana.

The two of them melted and blended without resistance———

“Haaaa!”

I cut the scarecrow with the wooden sword into two.

The two divided parts of the scarecrow scattered sparks and in the next moment———

It ignited in a flashy manner.

“Oh, it’s made of wood indeed. Really flammable.”

“...”

The surrounding silence is scary.

Eh, did I make a blunder?

“Uhm, Branch Leader.”

“Wha-what was that, just now! No, I cannot comprehend it. It’s a skill that uses both flame magic and Aura magic. But being able to do it is another matter entirely!”

She kept on talking rapidly.

Was the skill I used really that amazing?

“But it’s theoretically possible in magic books———”

“It is theoretically possible! It’s impossible normally! What do you think is the use of distinction between rearguard magicians and vanguard soldiers! It’s common sense that you can’t use magic and Aura at the same time!”

It came from an old magic book so I thought someone already achieved it. Grandfather, why did you not tell me it's abnormal!? It's different from ordinary, but I have an idea why the two types of magic cannot be used simultaneously.

"B-but isn't it alright since it will make me conspicuous?"

Branch Leader let out a long sigh.

"You will surely stand out this way, extremely that is... sigh. Let's go back to the guild for now and register your rank."

She said negligently, as if she just gave up on something. S-sorry, or something.

I dragged along Neil-san who had long become frozen in surprise, and left behind the still noisy training grounds.

Sword Saint's Disciple - Volume 2 - Chapter 3

2-3. Rank and Commission

A group pulling a cart that made rattling sounds passed before me. Almost all of them are in work clothes but some are wearing nun's habit and priest uniforms.

I, together with Branch Leader and Neil-san, are on the way back to the guild.

"The people just now..."

"Yeah, the guys from the Reflux Sect of Baal Religion? It looks like they're carrying relief goods to pioneering villages." Branch Leader answered instead of the impassive Neil-san.

By Baal Religion, you mean that Baal Religion!?

"Eh, but wasn't this country founded as a consequence of Baal Religion?"

Why are they inside Garschia like it's something common!?

"What, Ojou-chan doesn't know? When Garschia Kingdom was founded, they're the guys who can't throw away their faith and made a different organization instead."

What?

It's different from Dao Empire's Baal Religion?

Branch Leader must have seen my expression still full of doubts because she gave a detailed explanation.

"Well, that full of shit Human Supremacy Doctrine was abolished. Those guys declared that they will go back to the true doctrine and deified the original God of Harvest, Baal. That is why they are called the Reflux Sect."

Speaking of which, there were also many factions of religion in my previous

life.

The conversation continued while we walked slowly according to Branch Leader's pace as she use a cane.

"Then, the rebellion—"

"Obviously. They have no difference from Baal Religion. But right now, they carry relief goods for new villages established in reclaimed wastelands. They also distributed food to refugees during Garschia's founding."

...I always thought that Baal Religion itself is completely evil, but it seems like I have to change my mentality.

It is not something so one-sided.

"The result is that they are now recognized as a different organization from Dao Empire's Baal Religion. Of course, they were not the only group who agreed to that decision."

The charity works appear to be effective to some degree.
But if it's only that much, it is not enough to let them gain trust.

"May I ask one more thing? The First Prince publicly declared that he is a believer of Baal Religion, is it the Reflux Sect?"

I asked about my doubt since this is a good chance.

"Obviously, I do not know where it came from, but rumors that he hates other races spread. The charity works of the Reflux Sect helped him so the First Prince's support is actually not low. Still..."

Branch Leader hesitated.
The First Prince's support is not as hopelessly low as I imagined.

"The royal family never publicized any religious color until now, they did not support a specific religion. Then the First Prince suddenly came with Baal Religion. Isn't it suspicious?"

They say that it was a consideration towards a country with varied races. There are many people without religion, elves and dwarves believe in nature, and I heard that Werebeasts have a lot of religion where they worship their great ancestors.

As a general rule, you are free to choose your own religion in Garschia Kingdom.

As for Branch Leader's suspicion, the First Prince may be allied with the Empire. There is a possibility of being Dao Empire's spy and the Reflux Sect is just a cover to conduct activities inside the country.

"However, there is no evidence even if it's very suspicious. In addition, the country promised religious freedom in consideration with the other races, so there is no reason to disqualify the First Prince as King candidate. What a dilemma."

Religion is so complicated.

Because it is related to a person's delicate part.
It looks like they also can't make Baal Religion as an exception.

"With that situation, I'm expecting on you, Ojou-chan. If you think it's possible, you need to crush his influence so First Princess Lily can be the King."

Branch Leader ended the conversation like that.

"You're still like that, Neil?"

We returned to Branch Leader's office.
Branch Leader grumbled as she had enough of Neil-san, who is still frozen.
But Neil-san walked when I pushed his back.

"Oi, Neil-san?"

There is no reaction even if I waved my hand in front of him.
Branch Leader became impatient and stepped forward.

"You're getting nowhere. Let me do it."

Branch Leader hit Neil-san's cheeks rather hard.
It seems painful.

"Wha-!? Where is this-ssu!? Is it a dream that Cathia-san is an Aura Master and burned a the target with a blade-ssu!?"

Neil-san came back.
But his way of speaking is different from the usual.

“Get ahold of yourself, it’s not a dream. And your speech, it turned back.”

“No way!?”

“Is your original manner of speaking like that? Neil san.”

“It’s embarrassing-ssu.... I mean, it’s embarrassing. I corrected it when I entered the Knight Order but it goes out sometimes...”

“If it’s alright with you, you can talk normally in front of me.”

We are know each other after all.

I am not really an important person so he doesn’t need to be formal with me.

“Even I said that to you before. There’s no need for formal speech if the person in front of you already knows—” (Branch Leader) “If Cathia-san says so, then I won’t hold back-ssu!” (Neil)

“This bastard...” (Branch Leader)

A vein popped in Branch Leader’s head.

Why didn’t he comply when Branch Leader asked before?

“Aren’t you very straightforward, Neil. In other words, it’s that? But Ojou-chan doesn’t notice at all. What a hard nut to crack. I’m sure there will be a lot of hardships.”

“N-no, that’s wrong-ssu! Ah, but she didn’t notice-ssu? I’m somewhat relieved-ssu.”

“This incompetent...”

What kind of conversation is this!?

This is that, and that is what??

...Let’s go back to the discussion.

The one about ranks.

“Then, what will be my soldier rank?”

Branch Leader answered while sitting down on a chair.

“Initially, the highest we can give is B-rank. That is normally decided after winning several matches through mock battles.”

Branch Leader kept talking while writing a document.

“Judging from that sword injected with a combination of Aura and fire magic, it is obvious to everyone that doing mock battles are unnecessary. Even without that, you have refined sword muscles. I will exempt you by the power of my authority as Branch Leader. I have to send you to the Capital quickly, and you can just display your true ability in actual combat after that.”

“Thank you very much.”

It seems like I met her expectations.

I’m glad.

She was also thinking about the time convenience.

“B-rank...to become easily above me...huhu.”

“U-uhm, Neil-san?”

Neil-san became depressed.

“Don’t mind him. Neil is just C-rank, y’know? But it’s very high for an eighteen years old.”

Neil-san is eighteen years old?

A year older than me.

But if we convert my age mentally...

No, stop it.

Afterwards is... ah, that’s right.

“I don’t really understand the strength difference between ranks...”

I’ll ask about it just in case.

Branch Leader folded her arms.

“Right... Did you know that the Kingdom’s army is small-scaled?”

“Yes.”

Neil-san told me that a while ago.

Why are you always asking people to tell you things, self.

“The numbers may be few, but what we want is quality. This applies to those above D-ranks. Incidentally, G is the lowest rank.”

I do not know the distribution of the number of people, but it may be something variable.

From what I heard, C-rank is already high.

“And B rank is already in Elite class. Be proud of it. But what do we call those superior soldiers holding the highest ranks? A and S ranks are already celebrities and the brass of the military, the Hero class.”

In other words, there is a big wall between B and A-S ranks.

Hmmm.

“Then, I’ll give you your first job... Neil, how long are you staying in this town?”

Branch Leader only talked about the essential things and then changed the topic.

“Ah, yes-ssu. Spike-sama said that in two months, the King will be announced during the gathering-ssu... We’ll start moving again in two to three days-ssu.”

Neil-san answered in a completely informal tone.

He surely recovered quickly.

“Fumu, is that so? Then—”

At that moment, there was a sudden knock in the door.

“Branch Leader, will you please come? There’s someone from the Intelligence Bureau.”

Intelligence Bureau? What for?

“Let them enter. There are other visitors but they are likely aware of it.”

“Of course, I know that.”

He talks like he is familiar with us.

A man entered when the door was opened.

Uhhmm, this person...

I’m not sure, but this is probably Nanashi-san.

His hairstyle and aura are different from before.

He is completely dressed in a merchant-like clothes.

“Nanashi-san! ...Right?”

“Hoh, this is the third time you saw through me. You are right, Cathia-dono.”

It looks like I’m right.

But, what is this person.

I can’t guess his age at all.

“Eh, if Cathia-san knows you, you were the person from the Intelligence Bureau who traveled with me from the Royal Capital-ssu...?”

“Neil-kun is still the same as ever. I feel dejected. Also, your habitual tone is nice. Please call me Nanashi. Because it will be troublesome otherwise.”

Nanashi-san hurled sarcasm at Neil-san.

Branch Leader interjected at that point.

“Now that you’re acquainted, let’s go to business.”

“How impatient. I have brought a suitable job for Cathia-dono. It is not your obligation to do it, but will you accept it as much as possible?”

A suitable job for me?

What could it be?

“Oi, for it to go through the Intelligence Bureau, could it be—”

It seems like something came to Branch Leader’s mind.

“Yes. We suspect the participation of a noble from the First Prince faction. The thieves’ hideout was discovered.”

Thieves?

Additionally, they’re related to a noble’s crime.

The first time I’ll fight as a soldier will be apparently against humans.

“Then why is it a job suitable for me?”

“Before I proceed, Cathia-dono what do you think did the thieves steal?”

Nanashi-san asked.

What, you ask...

“It’s not assets or provisions like usual?”

“That’s not it. Those people stole—humans. Particularly the weak women and children.”

Humans?

What an unexpected answer.

“They aimed at pioneering villages which easily accept offers of help in defense. Then they sell them away to the Dao Empire using a route constructed by nobles. Of course, the nobles receive percentage of the money. Really, it makes me want to vomit.”

Nanashi-san talked with an expression that doesn't show whether he really thinks it's disgusting or not.

As for me, I am really completely disgusted.
I heard that land reclamation, especially at the first stage of village development, has a lot of places that need monster extermination.

“Oh, your eyes are glazed with anger Cathia-dono. Do you feel like accepting it?”

A sudden sense of impending crisis filled me when I heard that a newly-established village, something that is familiar to me, is being targeted.
Calm down.

It's true that I hate those kind of guys.

But I need to calmly judge if the job is something I can accomplish.

“...First, I want to hear the whole details. Is it fine with Branch Leader and Neil-san?”

“Yes, that's fine. But as the branch leader of this guild, I want to entrust this matter to someone with high abilities as much as possible.”

Branch Leader nodded.

“Me, too-ssu. I will leave it to Cathia-san's decision-ssu.”

Neil-san also agreed.

“Is it alright? Then...”

Nanashi-san narrowed his eyes lightly when he heard that and began the explanation.

Sword Saint's Disciple - Volume 2 - Chapter 4

2-4. Old Soldier's Advice

At evening.

In a place near the thieves' hideout, at the top of the hill not visible to the highway.

Some tents can be seen in the small plaza enclosed with a mud wall that is rougher than the one in Kaisa village.

There is no doorway, it seems to have been shut from the inside using earth magic.

The height is 3.5 meters.

After the explanation, I decided to receive the commission from the Information Bureau.

Summarizing Nanashi-san's narration, there are for important points in today's mission.

First, break out the kidnapped people in the hideout, delay the thieves' awareness as much as possible to avoid a hostage situation.

The thieves placed a guard in a simple lookout stand, only a few people can be mobilized since the terrain doesn't have places to hide a large group of people.

Second, it's probable that the abducted people will be transported at night, so we only have right now to make a surprise attack.

The thieves' vigilance will be higher in the middle of transportation.

Three, rescue the agent of the Information Bureau, keep the thieves confined if we are discovered, or suppress them otherwise.

Four, capture and make use of the thieves as much as possible to gain information about the noble.

However, not to the extent that their lives will be in danger.

In case a third party is discovered, “,” or so Nanashi-san said.

When I heard that we didn't have to kill the thieves, I felt pathetically relieved. I don't have to kill humans.

The number of people from Information Bureau including Nanashi-san is five, while the combat group is four people in total— me, Neil-san, Dan-san who's a dwarf (B-rank) and Mina-san who's an elf (C-rank).

Will we be alright with just four people...?

Mina-san is female and Dan-san is male.

On the other hand, the thieves number about 40 people and the abducted people were believed to be about 20 people.

The difference in numbers is large but Branch Leader said, “It's enough considering the ranks.”

But thinking about the common sense in my previous life, the difference is just unreasonable...

“Ooh, Redhead-nee-chan. Maybe you're scared?”

Dan-san asked in a whisper while smoothing down his beard.

Mina-san, who is holding a magic staff, cut in through the conversation.

“That's rude, Dan. We already did the introductions so call her by her name properly. Sorry, Cathia-san.”

Surprisingly, Dan-san and Mina-san are husband and wife.

Dan-san is 60 years old and even if she doesn't look like it, Mina-san is around 30 (she didn't tell her exact age). They don't look like a married couple at all.

This world's dwarves, elves and werebeasts have the same lifespan as humans.

Though they possess longevity in my previous life's assumption, I never dreamed of meeting them personally.

Dan-san has a 150 cm long, white beard.

Mina-san has a semi-long pale blond hair and long pointed ears measuring 160cm.

“No, but I'm definitely nervous.”

I also responded in a whisper.

“There's no need to think too hard. You just need to crush ten people while protecting the abducted guys.”

Dan-san said while shouldering his hammer.
It's indeed a dwarf's equipment.
His way of speaking come off as violent, but is it possible that he's worrying about me?

"Uhm, we'll get discovered if you talk too much-ssu."

Neil-san drew our attention.
Judging from the length of his weapon, it appears to be a bastard sword.
Silence ruled the place for a while.
I braced myself again and prepared to move anytime.
Right then, Neil-san exclaimed in a low voice.

"Guys! It's the signal-ssu!"

Neil-san pointed ahead where a small fireball made of magic is floating in the air.
I began to dash single-mindedly.
People's lives are at stake here.

I saw a part of the earth wall collapsing while I ran.
Over there!
Inside the mud wall, I joined the Information Bureau and the abducted people making their escape near the hole I made in the mudwall.
According to the information, women and children are the priority.
I don't see anyone injured.
Did we make it in time?
Without a pause, the thieves appeared with heavy footsteps and panicking appearance.
They're holding weapons but there are many things showing that they came in a hurry, like how their gears are not put on properly.
I need to buy time for the prisoners to escape.

"Right here! Come at me!"

Drawing my sword, I deliberately made flames shoot out from it.
From the fact that I recently learned, if you think that magic and Aura cannot be used at the same time...

"This woman is stupid! Producing magic from sword!"

Alright, they took the bait!

Matching the baited thieves rushing forward, I let Aura build up inside my body and made it erupt.

The enemy's sword was cut into two by my black sword,

"E-eh!?"

Then I bashed the thief's solar plexus using the handle of the main gauge in my left hand.

One down!

The surrounding thieves watched while feeling shaken.

It's a chance.

Among the people who stopped moving, I aimed at the comparatively older and well-dressed thief.

If my guess is right, the situation will become more advantageous.

I set a low-powered fire in front of the man, then I took the opportunity to go around the rear when he leaned back in surprise.

I drove a blow into his scruff using the main gauge's handle.

Eh, I really don't need this dagger....

Let's put it away.

"Bo-boss! Hang in there! This bitchhh!"

My prediction was proven accurate, that man appears to be the thieves' leader.

The chaos accelerated.

I was worried considering the difference in numbers, but it seems okay.

The thieves were careless but they're weaker than I thought.

I destroyed the weapons of the two who continued attacking, driving the bottom of my palms to their chins to render them unconscious.

This makes four of them.

"Cathia-san, are you all right-ssu!? You ran so fast and you knocked them out so fast-ssu! You already took down four people-ssu!"

Neil-san and the others arrived.

Nanashi-san on the other hand...

“Cathia-dono! Everyone! I’ll leave the rest to you!”

He’s outside the wall.

Nanashi-san used earth magic from the outside and blocked all possible exits. The wall that is supposed to protect against the monsters changed into a prison in an instant.

“Now then, shall we begin? You better prepare bastards~”

Dan-san twisted his lips covered by his beard and coerced the thieves. From then on, it was a one-sided trampling. Each swing from Dan-san’s hammer and Neil-san’s bastard sword decreased the number of thieves. At the rear, Mina-san blew off the approaching thieves using wind magic. In addition to the seven I rendered unconscious, the thieves which decreased into 1/3 finally surrendered.

“Woah, Redhead! You crushed those guys’ leader easily.”

Dan-san called out to me. He’s still not calling me by my name as usual. Honestly, I feel relieved that no one died in this fight. But as a soldier, it would be impossible for me to avoid killing anyone...

“What’s wrong? You look depressed.”

Dan-san paid attention to me with his unusually rough tone.

“Dan-san...as a soldier, uhm...what do you think about killing humans? We didn’t kill anyone this time, but...”

Actually, I should find the answer by myself. But if I continue worrying about these things, I feel like it will result in an irreparable situation. As someone who only lived peacefully in Japan during my past life, I can’t even begin to think about it. That’s why I want to know Dan-san’s way of thinking as someone who had a long history of being a soldier.

“No way, are you are new recruit? To have that much skill... what kind of training did you do?”

It's because my master is amazing.
I think I can now ask the topic I want to hear about.

"Yes, I'm a new recruit. Will you teach me about the mental attitude needed for these situations?"

The subject change might be a bit forceful.
Though he had a curious expression, he answered back.

"It may sound somewhat preaching, but will you listen? This will seem like an old man's talk."

As I thought, he's the type of person who likes taking care of others.

"Yes, I'd like to hear it."

"Ohh. It's just my personal opinion so I don't know if you can use it as words of wisdom."

Dan-san stroked his beard.

"Let's assume I didn't become a soldier because I want to kill humans or monsters. Do you get up to this part? How about you?"

"Yes. The same goes for me, too."

He may be sometimes a bit of a madman but he's totally serious now.

I became a soldier due to Grandfather's request but now that I learned the situation, I serve the country for Kaisa Village. If the country of Garschia collapses, I don't know what will happen to Kaisa Village.

I don't have the heart to say something as grand as protecting the country, but I want to do my best.

"Then, you should feel good as much as possible when you kill someone!! It's the job of soldiers to bring down judgement to criminals!!"

"Ye-yes..."

How excessively forceful...

"Listen, Redhead. For what reason do you kill monsters?"

"Uhm, to defend myself and so we can have something to eat?"

“Yes, yes. You do it because it’s necessary. Also to harvest goods. Everyone deprive others of their lives in order to live. There is both good and evil in that. How about the case this time?”

“R-right. This time we didn’t have to kill the thieves. But...”

The situation was just lucky for now.

“That’s true. I also won’t hesitate to kill the thieves if they tried to kill someone in front of me, y’know?”

I wonder what I would do?

I can’t confidently say that I can absolutely do that.

“The most important thing is that you’re prepared of that situation. Make sure of the things you want to protect, and have the resolve to cut down anything other than that. Think of the most necessary thing to you.”

Making sure of the things you want to protect...

So that’s it. I just realized.

Compared to the feeling of guilt over committing murder, my heart gave priority to protect instead.

As for the side I helped, they must have wished for someone to come rescue them...

There are no casualties in the end, but I did not have enough of the necessary resolve when I accepted the mission.

“Luckily, this country’s abnormal system allows it. There’s some degree of freedom to choose what kind of mission and work you receive. A soldier doesn’t have to stop and reflect.”

What Dan-san says is not too complex.

Think wisely with your head and if it’s necessary, do not hesitate to display your power.

An answer that isn’t an answer...but strangely enough, that mentality turned out to be fit for me.

“Thank you very much. I’m really glad I met you today.”

I’m probably the only one who was able to meet with a character like this on my first day of being a soldier.

“That way of speaking is like a love confession! Redhead!”

Dan laughed heartily after saying that.

Did I do something wrong?

“The thieves’ arrest are over. What were you two having a serious talk about instead of helping?”

Mina-san came over to where we are.

“Well, Redhead here just confessed to me. If I were thirty years younger, I would accept—owww!”

Mina-san pulled on Dan-san’s beard.

Mina-san’s smiling face is scary...

Sword Saint's Disciple - Volume 2 - Chapter 5

2-5. Lord Raza's Mansion

The branch Leader greeted us when we returned to the guild.
We separated from Dan-san and Mina-san in the reception desk.
I received encouragement from Dan-san, saying "Do well!"
They're good-hearted people...
I am now in Branch Leader's office together with Neil-san.
Documents are piled up neatly on Branch Leader's desk.

"Good work. Here, your compensation."

Branch Leader handed 15000 rushi.
This world has a proper monetary system.
One rushi is about 10 yen, so converting it would be equivalent to 150000 yen.
When I heard it for the first time, I remember feeling relieved since it's very easy to understand.
I already experienced shopping once.
Though it's just to a peddler who visited the village.
Gold coins, silver coins and copper coins— well, put those kind of money out of your mind.

"Does the country's military have monthly salary system?"

Travel expenses to the Royal Capital seem to fall under their expenses, it's a benefit that I can receive a bit more payment.
Travel expenses are provided in cash so I'm not worried about my pocket at the moment.
By the way, a mercenary soldier's salary rises and falls according to the kind of work.
Even soldiers who work like civil servants can have below-average way of living if they're paid too poorly.

“This is a reward from the village for the kidnapping incident. It’s different from the country’s.”

From the pioneering village?

Thief subjugation falls under peace and order maintenance, the reward is basically paid by the country and the territory.

It seems like people receiving the protection are free to pay reward as they please.

But I’m aware from my experience in Kaisa Village that there’s no surplus of money from pioneering a village.

It’s easy to imagine that the village people with strong sense of duty overworked themselves to raise this money.

As for the village damages, the kidnappers had an encounter with the males making up manpower, only few aren’t injured.

Almost everyone was able to return to the village because of this rescue.

However, even if human damage was little, the development plan for the village will surely be delayed.

“Can you please return it? This money.”

Her tail and ears comfortably moving suddenly stopped, Branch Leader looked dubious.

Is it strange after all?

“Return?”

“I’m aware of the hardships of a pioneering village. I think that they should have the money until the village is stable.”

It’s money that is difficult to accept personally.

I can imagine that a village that hasn’t even a name yet will be in distress.

“But, Cathia-san. I don’t think they’ll feel good if you reject the money they offered-ssu. Ah, why don’t you use it for your own share of travel expenses-ssu?”

Neil gave frank advice.

Ugh, that’s certainly the case.

“That’s right... But, I’m worried about the village.”

It’s true that I can support the village by buying the crops they started

producing.

Even if I did that, I can't deny that it's only for self-satisfaction.

“Change your mentality. Repair your equipment using the money you received and eat proper meals. You should make an effort in peace maintenance. I think it's important that you spend that money meaningfully and never let anyone suffer through the same harm again.”

Oh, it's the mentality of Soldier Guild.

Since I don't have that way of thinking, does it mean my sensibility is still insufficient?

Or is it because of difference in experience?

Eons of years than a tortoise shell, older than a pinecone... eh, did I get it wrong?

<Note: Original idiom is 亀の甲より年の功 meaning, 'wisdom grows with age'. She got the last character wrong.>

It seems like she'll be angry if she's treated like an old person.

Anyway, it's different if anego is the one saying it!

“Mmm, I understand. I will do as you say.”

Then, I'll eat something delicious.

Can I be like Neil-san and help with the traveling expenses?

“Yes, do that. Then, I still have work. Go, you guys go home!”

We were kicked out of the office.

Still, she looks busy.

One of the relieving staff entered.

The door is half-open so their conversation can be heard.

“Anego! These are the documents that'll be sent to the higher ups tomorrow —”

“I told you not to call me anego, this fool! Call me Branch Leader!”

She's really being called as anego.

It fits her just as I expected.

“What's wrong, Cathia-san?”

It looks like my expression became loose.

Neil-san questioned me.

“No, it’s nothing.”

I left the place while enduring my laughter.

It’s already dark when we left the Soldier Guild.

The fire magic powering up the street lights gently illuminated the town’s main street.

There’s nothing similar to this feeling of a paved road in Japan.

I prefer Japanese style but Western style town scape is not bad either.

If you breath deeply, your lungs will be filled with smells of cooking dinner from the different houses.

Yep, I’m hungry.

“By the way, Cathia-san. Just as promised, I’m inviting you to my house.”

“Ah, yes. Thank you for taking care of me.”

Neil-san and I walked at the night town together.

The shadows produced by the illuminated lamps stretched to and fro.

The bustling daytime disappeared as if it was a dream, and both our footsteps echoed steadily due to the silence.

“Can I hear about Neil-san’s family members?”

“Of course-ssu. There’s my father, one older brother, two older sisters and me, making a total of five-ssu. But right now, the only people at home is my father and my second sister-ssu.”

Neil-san answered my question generously.

Is it better if I don’t ask about his mother?

Though he answered like it’s normal, I am not that insensitive after all.

Do you hear it as far as you listen?

“Where are your brother and your first sister?”

“My brother is inspecting a pioneering village while my first sister became a bride and married into another family-ssu.”

The eldest son is the future town Lord so he had to study in the form of inspections.

While the eldest daughter married and left the house.

Which reminds me, which onee-san is he weak at?

“You told me before you had a strong-willed onee-san, which of them is it?”

Neil-san said she has the same type of face as mine.

“Ah, that’s my first sister-ssu. I feel lonely but I’m honestly also relieved—
waaaah! You didn’t hear anything just now!”

“Neil-san is honest, huh?”

This is what they also call stupid.

Throwing off reservations is good, but isn’t that a little too excessive...?

“Ahaha...my father os relatively calm, but my second sister is an eccentric person-ssu.”

“Eccentric?”

“Though I guess my father is also eccentric.”

“Eh, say it in detail.”

“You’ll understand when you meet them-ssu. We’re here.”

A little farther away from the gates with lattice, the Lord’s mansion which is as big as four normal houses combined can be seen.

It’s made of stone just as usual and a well-kept garden can also be seen inside.

The walls are made of bricks, it’s a little more stylish than the surrounding scenery.

The guard greeted us and opened the gates.

We walked a slight distance in the garden, then Neil opened the door when we arrived at the entryway.

Then, please excuse me...

Nn? There’s a hint of a person very close to us.

“Teyaaa!”

An elf man with a white and green rod-shaped thing slashed(?) at me.

I have plenty of leeway so I intercepted the attack by catching the weapon with my bare hands.

Whaat?

“You may have done it, Cathia Myers! But it’s not over yet!”

He called my name, so maybe he’s an authorized person in this house.
It has a terribly theatrical impression so maybe it’s some kind of joke.
Should I just play along...?

“Wh-who the hell are you?! Why do you know my name—”

Please excuse my stiff acting.
What’s the heck is this farce...

“Fufu, that is because...I am the Lord of this town!”

“Wha-what did you say!?”

This person is the feudal lord!?
Neil-san’s appearance is totally human so I never assumed he will be an elf.
It’s unexpected.

“Father, please don’t act that way in front of a guest! It’s embarrassing!”

I got the confirmation from Neil-san’s brief comment.
There’s no mistake that the man before me is the Lord.
So Neil-san has elf blood.
I never realized since I can’t feel it from his appearance.

“Well, the villain from the book I read recently is so cool. I did it unintentionally. But for Neil to use that kind of informal speech, it looks like you’ve become very close.”

A parent and child’s conversation has started.

“Guuh! No, we’re talking about Father right now-ssu! Even if it’s a joke, why are you attacking with a sword all of a sudden-ssu?!”

“If it’s Tim-san’s disciple, it would be easily dodged, right?”

“Your point is strange! ...Never mind-ssu. Sorry, Cathia-san. This person is my Father, Gale Raza-ssu. Please excuse his rudeness-ssu.”

“Hello, Cathia-san. I am Raza Town’s feudal lord, Gale Raza. I got carried away, but thank you for going along with me.”

He's surely an eccentric person.
He doesn't have that wall caused by social disposition, he's similar to Neil-san in terms of their relaxed atmosphere.
As for appearance, he's an with pretty blonde hair and some wrinkles can be seen in his face.
He's not young but's he's a good-looking man.
It's not sarcasm since I don't get that arrogant feeling from him.
'No way, so unfair ikemen! Go explode!' my previous self shouted.
For his attire, he's wearing noble clothes loosely but not to the extent that it would be unsightly.

"Nice to meet you, I am Cathia Myers."

For the time being, I'll return the thing I received when I used the bare-hand stopping technique just now.
The true identity of that white and green thing is actually leek, a vegetable of the same category as green onions.
A middle-aged man assaulting a teenage girl with a green onion...yep, he's not normal.
Don't play around with food!

"Is Tim-san fine?"

Gale-san asked while spinning around the leek that I returned back to him.
Is he acquainted with Grandfather?

"You know Grandfather?"

Neil-san nodded twice while saying, "Yes, yes."

"Yes we're acquainted. I was in his debt a long time ago so when he retired, I more or less took advantage of it. I blocked all information on his whereabouts."

"That is...thank you very much. You made it possible for him to spend his days peacefully until now. Grandfather is healthy even if his waist hurts."

I'm really thankful that no unwelcome guest came to the mountain hut.
But monsters came though.

"Well, Tim-san did me a favor that I can't ever repay. Don't worry about it."

Gale-san spoke while scratching his cheek.
It's a gesture that Neil-san does, too.
They don't resemble each other very much, but they're parent and child after all.
Did Grandfather come to this land because he had a relation with his person?

"How long are you going to stand talking at the entrance? Let's go to the dining hall-ssu. Come on, Father."

Neil-san suggested and Gale-san nodded, too.

"That's right. Cathia-dono, welcome to our home. Please be at ease."

"Yes, thank you very much. I'm grateful for your favor."

I pass through the entryway and followed after the two of them.
Woah, the carpet is so soft.
It's fluffy.
I walked to the dining room while enjoying the feeling transmitted to the sole of my feet.

Sword Saint's Disciple - Volume 2 - Chapter 6

The Moment Everything Changed.

In the dining room there was a table long enough for eight people, it was there we would eat dinner.

Our swords and other equipment had been deposited elsewhere.

Even though the ingredients were harvested within the town's territory they were not noteworthy but, because of good cropland there is plenty of variety.

Hunger helping as well, the food was extremely delicious.

Currently the mood is like, 'an after dinner conversation.'

I pleasantly talked with Gael-san about various things such as, Jiji-sama's story and plans from here on, being careful in the royal capital, *etc.*

'Speaking of, is your sister not going to eat?'

Cutting into and interrupting the conversation I asked concerning the sister who was supposed to live here.

After all, she has yet to appear, right!?

'Ah... Phie-nee, huh...? Father, is she doing her usual?'

'Yes. It's her usual.'

Usual?

I'd like a conversation I can understand, please.

Before I could give a guess, Neil-san gave an explanation.

'Ah, sorry. My older but not eldest sis's name is Phiena but-'

Gael-san took over and continued the topic.

‘Phiena is painting... And when she does, she becomes entranced and won’t leave her room for a while.’

Painting?

Oneesan, you’re an artist?

Being able to go nuts over something to the point of forgetting meals is somehow... I might be a little jealous.

Nah, well... In this life I do nothing but swing the sword though.

‘I want to swing the sword. Teach me.’ When I was little I said that to Jiji-sama and he got an enormous grin on his face.

That sort of grin is unfair.

Somehow I had gotten caught in the depths of swordsmanship and continue to swing the sword to this very day.

‘Phie-nee is famous. She specializes in portraits and even got requested to paint Spike-sama’s portrait! She’s a boast worthy big sis!’

‘That’s really amazing. She’s still young, right?’

You seem glad talking about this, Neil-san.

The previous king’s painting, eh?

She is for sure not your average painter.

‘Phiena is twenty years old. Her parent is worried about her marrying, but somehow she’s living life so enjoyable that he can’t say anything.’

Gael-san smiled bitterly while informing me of her age and mixing in a complaint.

I wonder what sort of person she is.

All of a sudden my interest shot up.

I want to meet her.

‘You can meet her tomorrow morning. Now then, since it’s late it’s time for sleep. A maid will show you to your room. You can take a bath there.’

After Gael-san stated such he rang a small bell.

Maid-san entered and bowed.

Then, I will gladly accept this offer.

I am tired for a number of reasons today.

Thank you very much. Now then, good night, Gael-san. Niel-san.'

Gael nodded while saying, 'Good night.'

'G'night, Katia-san.'

I was led by Maid-san up a gentle curving staircase.

Guest rooms seem to be on the second floor.

'Your room is here. Please call me at any time at your convenience.'

Maid-san bowed and then left.

I opened the door to a wide room complete with two beds, a low table with chair, and a portrait painting standing in front, with a young lady doing a handstand in front of that.

Her clothing was exposing a pretty, lily white back.

....!?

'Ah, sorry. I must have made a mistake.'

I closed the door.

And from the room I heard a voice saying, 'You didn't make a mistake~. This is the guest room~.'

A slow witted sounding voice.

Ehhh.....?

That's the aforementioned sister?

I don't think anyone else qualifies.

Why's she in a guest room?

'Um, sorry to intrude.'

In any case, waiting around won't change the situation. So I twisted the doorknob and entered.

This time she was standing there normally and looking in my direction.

A beautiful lady who took after Gael-san who's shoulder length golden hair, long ears, and greenish looking eyes, held the appearance of a top notch elf.

Niel-san and this person, they don't resemble the same half elf since they don't look alike and their appearance takes more after one race.

She had a slender body and stood about 5'2" high.

She wore a deep blue smock like clothing, stained here and there with paint.

'My bad. I was completely~ not able to concentrate in my room. I was supposed to be able to finish before a guest came, you see.'

'Ahhhh. No, I don't really mind... It? Nice to meet you. My name is Katia Myerz
I may be utterly baffled but first comes the self introduction.

'Hm, thank you for your courtesy. Katia-chan, huh? I am Phiena Raza!'

Neil-san's sister was correct.

'Erm, why a handstand...?'

Honestly, my brain has still yet to process that scene.

The meaning is far too hard to understand.

'Well~ If you don't see a person from multiple angles you can't see their true nature, right? The painting is the same and that's why I do hand stands like that~'

Understanding the average person is difficult.

No wait, I could only understand the first half, though.

'That's... Is turning the painting upside down no good, then?'

Perhaps the handstand itself has some kind of meaning to it?

If it were myself a handstand would be no good.

Phiena-san quickly let out a laugh.

'Ah ha ha ha! That's right, isn't it! Why have I been doing a handstand!'

It seems there was no particular meaning.

And so this 'lax mood' is unmistakably a common feature to the people of this household.

The laughing Pheina-san breathed out to steady herself.

'Fu~. But... Katia-chan's face, where do I recall seei-Ah!'

All of a sudden Pheina-san's atmosphere changed.

I wonder what happened?

'Stay still right there!'

Phiena-san left the room in a hurried manner.
She returned carrying what looked like a new canvas and art supplies.

‘Don’t move, okay!?’

I could sense a somewhat frantic appearance from her.
Having been overpowered by the state of things I did as told and stood still.
A stare from deep green eyes were transfixed by me.
However, I somehow had an uncomfortable feeling.
I can’t put it in words very well but somehow, was she looking at me or was she not?

Phiena-san’s gaze began to hurriedly move between me and the canvas

For a while Phiena-san moved her hand at a quick speed but then stopped.
She stared at my painting in a daze seemingly finished.
I wonder if it’s alright to move?
I went around Phiena-san to take a look at the painting.
...Who?

On the painting there was certainly someone who looked like me, although they were a different person in some respects.
There was a mole under her right eye, and other details differed.
Her hair color and her eye color were brown.
If I had to say they’re closer to Niel-san’s hair colour.....?
Phiena-san let out a mutter, ‘I have to make sure...!’

Phiena-san put the canvas under her arm and left in a hurry.
I don’t understand the situation but for now... Let’s follow!
Phiena-san ran down the stairs, more and likely going into the salon.
I went after her.

‘Father! Father!’

‘What’s wrong, Phiena? You’re shouting.’

In the room Gael-san sat in a comfortable looking and slightly large chair facing Phiena-san who was showing him the painting.
Niel-san is also sitting in a similarly facing chair.
It seems they had been talking about something.
Gael-san’s reaction when he saw the painting was quite dramatic.

A look of doubt was painted over by shock.

‘Lena...!’

‘As I thought! Dad, I finally remembered mom’s face!’

After saying such Phiena-san’s face broke into a bright, joyous expression.
To clarify, that’s a painting of her mother?

Phiena-san looked my way.

‘Katia-chan, would you listen to my story?’

I won’t object.

Or rather, if I didn’t listen I would completely not understand the situation.

‘Yes.’

‘Katia-chan you know, looks like my mother! Your ambience and face as well. I think that was what surely jogged my memory and helped me to remember.’

That response is troubling...

Which reminds me, during the afternoon a similar thing was said.

‘It was said earlier by Niel-san, that I looked like his older sister.’

‘Yah, if it’s the just facial features then you certainly look like Ren-neesan as well. Katia-chan is more beautiful though. But, sis is short tempered so, the memory of my ‘always gentle mother’ could not connect, I think.’

Phiena-san explained while including extra remarks about her older sister.
Now that it’s mentioned, I don’t know where the birthplace of the body that I was given is from.

Perhaps it’s a possibility that I come from close blood ties to the Raza House.

‘When I first started painting I could not recall the face of the mother that I loved. Because of that, from the time I was young, everyday I tried to forcibly bring out the memory while frantically painting. In the end I was not able to recall until today.’

It’s just a guess but, Phiena-san’s mother died while she was very young, right?
To not even be able to properly remember her mother’s face, it had to be when she was very young.

‘Because, not being able recall an important person’s face is very lonely and a

sad thing. Working from that thought, that I don't want that for other people, when ever I received a request I would paint it.'

In this world there are no photographs.

So the vestiges of important people, excepting from the inside of memories, could not be sought out by many people.

It seems Phiena-san continued to regret not being able to record the memories of her mother's face.

She changed that regret properly into energy, managing to go so far as to use it for the sake of other people.

That's something I could not have done in my previous life before death.

She's a really amazing person.

'So, thank you Katia-chan. For helping me remember my mother's face.'

After saying such, Phiena-san's face showed a very pretty smile.

That smiling face was radiant, it was the sort of smile that could have caused a guy from my previous world to fall head over heels in love with in a single shot.